Ministry of Agriculture & Land Reclamation **US Agency For Intl. Development** **Agriculture Policy Reform Program** **Reform Design and Implementation**	وزارة الزراعة واستصلاح الأراضي الوكالة الأمريـــــكية للتنمية الدولية مشروع إصلاح السياسات الزراعية وحدة تصميم وتنفيذ الســياســـات

Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation

AGRICULTURE POLICY REFORM PROGRAM

Reform Design and Implementation Unit (RDI)

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APRP

Reform Design and Implementation Unit

Development Alternatives Inc. Group: Office for Studies & Finance, National Consulting
Firm Development Associates, Cargill Technical Services, The Services Group, Training
Resources Group, Purdue Universities, University of Maryland

Report No. 159

Report on Development of the
COTTON & RICE MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALCOTEXA ....Alexandria Cotton Exporters Association

APRP ....Agricultural Policy Reform Project

ASP ....Active Server Pages

C&F ....Cost and Freight

EEPC ....Egyptian Exports Promotion Center

FOB ....Free on Board

RDI ....Reform Design, and Implementation

SQL ....Structured Query Language

SSL ....Secure-Server Link

OVERVIEW
AND OBJECTIVES

Looking forward to coping with the global trend and improving the industry of two of the most important agricultural export commodities in Egypt, H.E. Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade assigned APRP/RDI to undertake the development of an Internet-based Market Information System for cotton and rice.

The main goals of this assignment are:

1. To Provide cotton and rice market participants and policy makers with timely, accurate, and relevant information that help them take better decisions about production, sales, and prices.

2. To Provide links to Egyptian exporters' and other related websites to facilitate and promote the export of these strategic crops.

METHODOLOGY

In response to this request, the APRP/RDI set up a team of experts to undertake this assignment. Members of the team worked in close collaboration with key persons in certain organizations involved with the industry, such as ALCOTEXA and EEPC.

Members of the team conducted numerous visits to institutions, organizations, and mills to establish information systems on cotton and rice.

The team built a system in which:
- A strategy of data collection and processing on a weekly basis was established for each commodity, and incorporated into a single database.
- A database-driven website was created for each crop.

The website structures are based on those databases, which means that they are updated automatically with the latest information without the need to redesign.

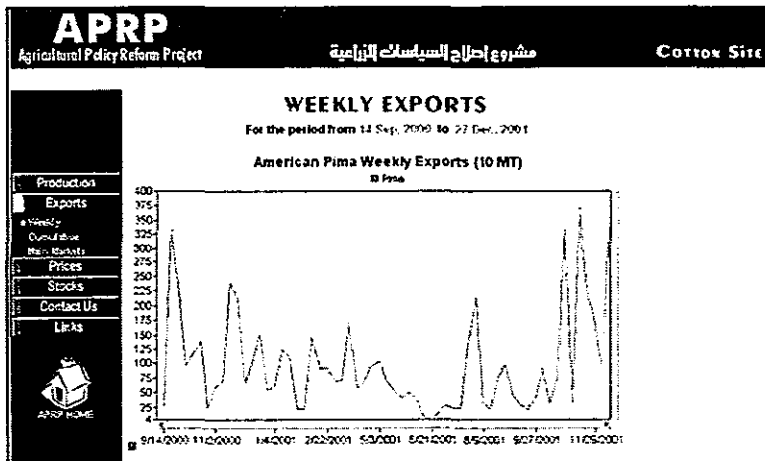Opening screen of the Cotton and Rice websites

SYSTEM FEATURES

A- COTTON SITE

http://www.agpolicy.com/new/cotton

The cotton website provides up-to-date information for use by exporters and policy makers in the cotton sector. This information includes:

- **Production:** Covers all varieties in the last season, including the type of each variety, and the produced quantities.

- **Exports:** Weekly and cumulative exports, and major importing countries.
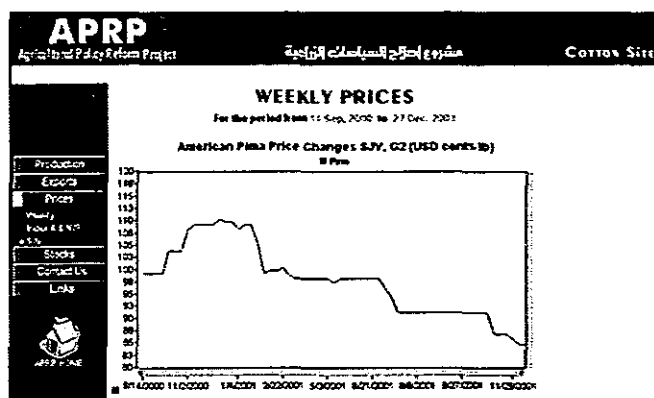

- **Prices:** Weekly prices of different cotton varieties in comparison with other international cotton markets.

- **Stocks:** Exported quantities, mill deliveries, and remaining and available stocks.

The site highlights competitiveness points with other key players in the field, namely the American Pima, San Joaquin Valley, and A-Index, and illustrates fluctuations in this industry.

The website provides data in the following forms:

- Data tables.

- Graphical representation of data in the form of user-scalable charts and histograms.
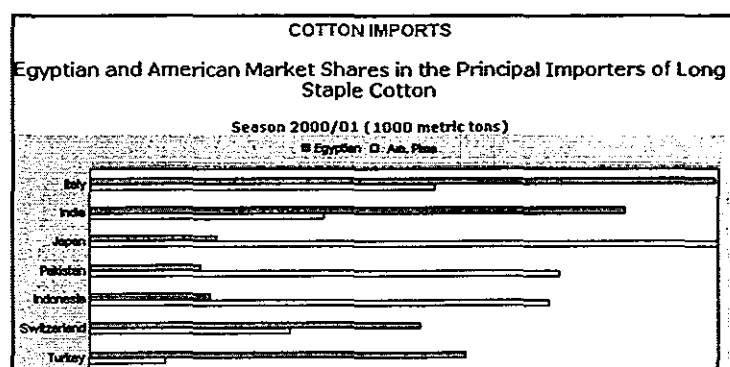
The application provides means of controlling period and intervals of reporting to obtain focused results

The cotton website can be reached at:

http://www.agpolicy.com/new/cotton

B- RICE SITE

http://www.agpolicy.com/new/rice

The rice website provides information to producers, traders, and exporters, including:

- **Production:**

Different rice varieties, and the main

governorates producing them, covering:

- Cultivated areas.

- Produced quantities.

- Yield of each governorate.

	Giza 171		
Governorate	Total Production (Ton)	Yield (Ton/Fed)	Area (Feddan)
Behaira	22464	3.43	6551
Gharbia	117869	3.54	33284
Kafr El Sheikh	434	3.24	134
Dakahlia	136475	3.3	41389
Sharkia	234186	3.71	63196
Qalyoubia	24989	3.5	7143
Total	536417	3.54	151697

- **Exports:**

  - Exported quantities, values and destinations in the last season.

  - Exported quantities and values to main markets in the last five seasons.

  - List of all Egyptian rice exporters and how to contact them.

- **Prices:**

A pricing system including local and export prices was established with the

assistance of EEPC personnel, through their price surveys on public and private mills

and exporters. It also gives an overview of other markets prices, particularly those

that compete with Egyptian varieties. This system provides:

  - C&F export prices in the last four years.

  - FOB export prices and ex-mill (domestic) prices.

  - Farmgate prices.

- International prices in different markets, such as Thailand, United States, and European markets.

The FOB and ex-mill data are averaged and views are available for last week and month, including type, variety, percent broken, and price.

- **Food Balance** sheet for rice in Egypt, describing total production, exports, human use, and per-capita consumption in the last ten years.

		Supply & Use						Uses			
Year	Prod.	Inventory Change	Export, Import	Available	Seeds	Industry	Loss	Human Use	Outturn Ratio %	Net Cons.	Per Capita Cons. (Kg.)
1991	3167	12	98	3057	66	38	61	2892	70	2033	37.2
1992	3448	84	272	3260	73	40	69	3078	71	2176	38.7
1993	3910	35	207	3668	77	41	78	3472	70	2434	42.7
1994	4161	137	359	3939	84	45	83	3727	70	2629	44.2
1995	4583	30	208	4406	84	45	88	4189	70	2937	49.5
1996	4789	25	326	4438	93	45	96	4204	70	2943	49.6
1997	4899	132	295	4737	74	44	95	4524	70	3167	52.3
1998	5480	3	824	4859	94	45	97	4623	70	3235	52.7

Egyptian Food Balance for Paddy Rice (1000 Ton)

- **Links:** Provides links to related websites, and information about other related organizations and institutions.

This website can be reached at:

http://www.agpolicy.com/new/rice

TECHNICAL
SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

A- INFRASTRUCTURE
AND SERVER-SIDE FEATURES

Database Platform :   - Microsoft Jet database engine
- Off-line data entry forms using Microsoft Access 97

Programming Languages :   - MS VBScript for Access
- Structured Query Language (SQL)
- Server-side ASP Scripts

Database File Security :   The database is located on the web server in a read-only mode. Data cannot be altered or tampered with through normal user access.

Data Transmission Security :   Normal, non-SSL connections are used.

Web Hosting :   ASP-Enabled Web Server
(Existing APRP hosting used)

B- WEB SITE
AND CLIENT-SIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Client-Side Software :	Java-enabled Internet browser. However, the application was tested for Netscape Navigator 4.75 compatibility. Appearance on other browsers may be slightly different.
User Interface :	The website is user-friendly and self-explanatory. Charts and histograms* have user-customizable resolution adjustments for accurate representation of data. The website has a standard Internet-style user interface, and no special computer or Internet skills required at the user side. However, professional experience with cotton and rice trade might be needed to comprehend industry-specific terminology and expressions.
User Registration :	Not required
Fault Tolerance :	Application provides basic verification and correction of search arguments for off-limit entries.
Number of Users :	The maximum number of users simultaneously allowed into the system without degradation in speed or performance is limited only by availability of resources on the server and connection (e.g., memory, disk space, processing power, bandwidth or link, etc.)

A third-party Java-based web charting package is used for generation of online charts and histograms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to keep both cotton and rice sites running, updated, and providing useful information to their clients, it is highly recommended to transfer the 'ownership' of both sites to such organizations that would be keen to update them on regular basis as well as upgrade and promote the sites.

A perfect and complete computer-based software application is not available, probably we will not see any in the near future. Cotton and rice websites are no exception. The important thing is to maintain an ongoing process of refinement, tuning, and upgrade for the application as needs emerge. The receiving organization must accept this idea and be prepared to cope.

The best candidates to adopt both websites are ALCOTEXA for the cotton site and EEPC for the rice site. Our team worked closely with both institutions throughout the span of development of these websites, and we feel they are more suitable than others to adopt and host the websites.